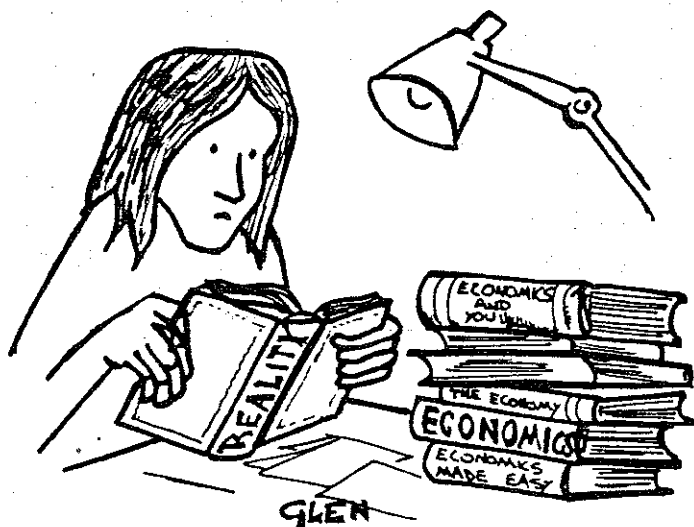


# CONNECT

The Newsletter of Youth Participation in Education Projects  
12 Brooke Street, Northcote 3070, Victoria, Australia.

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I'm deliberately falling into the practice of reprinting most letters sent to me about CONNECT. I guess I choose to omit the personal, but otherwise print what you write. I hope this is OK and doesn't deter anyone from writing. If you would rather your comments were kept just for me - please just say so and I'll respect your wishes.

Roger Holdsworth

# WHY YOUTH PARTICIPATION PROGRAMS?

There is no revelation involved in the statement that the chances, and choices, for youth to participate (politically, economically and psychologically) in our society are being continually eroded. Increasing numbers of youth are experiencing the fact that they have no place, and there is no place, in the legitimate social structures of our social system. These youth are disconnected and the personal and social implications of this locking out process are quite dramatic and often very destructive. I do not intend to quote a litany of side effects from this social alienation because that is documented quite thoroughly in other social welfare, educational and government sources.

The implications however of increasing unemployment and lack of perceived future for youth is having dramatic effects on the schooling process. The glue or promisory note that we held out in 'education' that more schooling equals a career or work placement is no longer true for numbers of young people. It is still accurate that a correlation does exist between school credentials and status work but only for the upper echelon of students. It is the middle (HSC) and lower levels of credentials that are being excluded.

Considerable talk in business and political circles about 'declining educational standards' abound. Even if we had data to make such comparisons (which we don't) it is a source of speculation as to why students would continue to take seriously those 'standards' when a distinct majority know they have lost their legitimacy. Schools have become dis-credited institutions for these youth because they know that years of schooling does not necessarily connect them to legitimate and personally satisfying futures. Meanwhile back at the school, teachers, parents and students have to face this reality on a daily basis. Where do we go from here? Another article might well offer a political and economic debate as to possible 'solutions'. But this is not the intention of this article. To continue with the compensatory, remedial or old liberal colonialist strategies to help 'failing students' is, according to the evidence, certain to produce failure on our part as teachers. Evidence of our success in these areas is scant and shaky to say the least. Let us therefore explore the possibility of alternative programs that could make sense.

## YOUTH OWNING THEIR OWN EXPERIENCES

One of the problems with our efforts in the past is that much of our program work was not seen by recipients (ie students) as being very useful or personally meaningful. This shouldn't come as a surprise. I don't imagine any of us enjoy being seen as remedial, special or whatever, especially if these categories are embarrassing or demeaning. To shift away from the often passive and dependent role imposed on students by this process then becomes an alternative.

If we as educators are also to see our teaching as introducing students to political, cultural, economic and personal understanding and debate, then our programs should reflect that concern both theoretically and practically. The problem with many school programs is their rampant anti-intellectualism which is often hidden under the classic liberal colonialist strategy of student-centred teaching or providing safe environments for students free from the drama of outside political or economic realities. While not all the content of these teaching strategies can be seen as undesirable, it is nevertheless very difficult for students to own their own experiences when subject to such close attention and control. How is it then possible for students to move forward in understanding of their world while at the same time feeling that their school and community is meaningful and they have a part in its planning and process. The task is how to provide a context of meaning and purpose for students that enables essential educational skills and learning to take place.

Programs or projects will have to be seen by the community as useful and young people in turn can feel useful and wanted by their work within the school/community. It is the connection between school and community which becomes a key to the program theory, especially if the program can be linked with a sense of social and economic usefulness. Students can bring to the experience their own history and skills and blend these qualities with the program intentions. A good example of this process is shown in the youth tutoring programs where young people can bring both cultural and language differences to a tutoring relationship and have their background highly valued. They are not put down by their differences, but instead they can teach through them. In my experience I do not know of any program that has not witnessed a positive interaction between tutor and tutee. In educational terms, it is trying to set a meaningful social context for students in order that they have a reason for learning.

#### EXAMPLES OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION PROGRAMS

- \* Peer and Cross Age Tutoring;
- \* Education Radio Program;
- \* Youth Employment Skills and Service Project;
- \* Child Care Program;
- \* Peer Group Program in Drug Abuse Prevention;
- \* Clerical aides for teachers;
- \* Office aides in administration, counselling and library;
- \* Student Evaluation Aides;
- \* Student advice centre in school;
- \* Youth Consultants;
- \* Student study centre;
- \* Student cooperative paperback and supply store;
- \* School recreation activities program;
- \* Student-Faculty Advisory Council;
- \* Youth involvement in community program;
- \* Youth advisors to regional and school departments;
- \* Elective courses developed and taught by teams of students;
- \* Youth operated study groups;
- \* Paired learning program.

The purpose of these programs is to allow students to develop and demonstrate competencies to:

1. Function as participants with adults in the planning and the resolution of problems in school and community settings;
2. Learning the processes of debate, discussion and decision-making in group structures;
3. Develop and plan human service activities;
4. Link academic content and learning in order to deal with important social issues.

The importance of these programs is to find new careers, new functions and new roles in schools that broaden competencies and life experiences. The world at large certainly doesn't offer youth (or adults) a very coherent perspective or world view. The reality is that the schoolhouse in 1980 increases this cultural fragmentation (or alienation) rather than attempting to take on, and make clear, the critical social issues of our time. Seldom do the economic/social issues that encroach daily on youth become reflected in school curriculum content and process.

These programs are offered in the spirit of debate and discussion. There is no evidence we can not solve social problems. But there is considerable evidence that if we ignore them - they will get worse.

## A NEW DEFINITION OF THE 3 Rs

I agree that students must be both literate and numerate. What youth participation programs try to establish is a different form of the 3 Rs. That is: **READING, RESEARCH AND REPORT.** Each program builds into its format a formal statement of academic intention. It is not an escape from intellectual skills - to the contrary, it is a strong confirmation of skill training to move students through the reading, research and reporting of their program experiences. There is nothing particularly new in this proposal. For example, Alfred North Whitehead in his Aims of Education written in 1929, proposed that instruction have immediate relevance and that it be connected to other life experiences and learning.

The problem with so much of the schooling process is its vigorous irrelevance to the lives of young people. Moving young people through stages of skill acquisition, intellectual understanding to the consideration of problem solving becomes the teaching strategy involved.

In summary, what youth participation programs aim to achieve is to establish programs within and between school and community that have political and economic significance, to develop a sense of caring and sharing within the program, and that the overall context provides for students a reason for learning in order to participate in problem solving activities. None of this is easy. Variation on this theme are all within the imagination of teacher and student. It however does appear, from past program experience, that these programs can contribute to student educational learning and a sense of social responsibility.

Tony Knight,  
Centre for Urban Education,  
La Trobe University,  
Bundoora. 3068



# Principles for Participation

*These are points made by Professor Art Pearl at a seminar at Footscray Demonstration unit on Saturday, March 22. While the headings are directly his, the comments are my interpretations and recollections.*

The following nine points are criteria for a good youth participation project:

1. Youth should be secure in their participation.

*There is so much insecurity and potential insecurity for young people in society and in their own development. The project should offer security to participants, in the project's acceptance of their involvement. (This is not to argue, however, that the project should insulate participants from economic and political realities - the opposite applies, and that confrontation with reality forms the basis of their security in the program.)*

2. There should be minimal pain in getting involved.

*We cloak involvement with so much masochism - boring and tedious meetings, agonising work, etc. The project should not be one that excludes participation because of some "trial by fire".*

3. The participation should make sense.

*In particular, rules of operation and processes of involvement should be demystified. People shouldn't be excluded by processes that only make sense to a few.*

4. The project should build feelings of competence.

*This is in distinction to those experiences which focus upon the deficiencies of youth. The project should concentrate upon and build the abilities of youth.*

5. The project should build feelings of usefulness.

*The project should enable youth to do things which are real and valued. Their participation should be in terms of their contribution to a real rather than a contrived end, and should be in terms that are recognised within the community.*

6. The project should build feelings of belongingness.

*Youth should feel that they and their contribution are indispensable to the outcome of the project and that they own the project.*

7. Participation should be exciting.

*Particularly if the project is in competition with distracting, and perhaps negative, influences, it must enable participants to feel excited by the project. People won't participate in a boring project.*

8. The project should convey hope for success.

*If leaders, organisers and other participants feel overwhelmed or negative about possible outcomes, others will be discouraged from being involved. Participants must believe that successful outcomes are possible.*

9. The project should create something new.

*The wheel should not be re-invented. A project which aims to re-create something already done, will be seen as something futile and contrived. There must be some element in which the project explores new frontiers and meets specific needs.*

Roger Holdsworth.

# Your Comments

Thank you for the complimentary copy of CONNECT. Enclosed is a subscription for the rest of the year - I hope that it helps you stay somewhat afloat. Reading CONNECT was enjoyable and enlightening - you are doing a mammoth and admirable job. I look forward to the next edition.

Jan Hargreaves  
Roma, Queensland.

Thanks very much for the copy of CONNECT. It continues to be most interesting and informative. Please find enclosed a cheque for my subscription.

Your idea for a national conference is exciting and I believe that it would be of great assistance. It would also focus attention on many worthwhile projects.

I am uncertain as to what might occur at Oakleigh High School this year. I presented the idea for a community magazine to our Education Committee and met with only a lukewarm response. I think people are put off by the amount of time and effort required and by the fact that it may centre round only one or two teachers. I will certainly be trying to initiate some form of magazine but it may be merely school-based.

I had planned to include articles by teachers in a magazine but I could only raise the interest of a few people. Perhaps I did not try hard enough! The problem seems to be that most people here do not see the need for a magazine/newspaper. I feel that the habit of communicating with parents via a school newsletter is too entrenched to be changed. It is doubtful whether I would be able to incorporate the newsletter into a student magazine.

I suppose the best plan of attack is to get the students producing something on a regular basis and see how it develops. Many of the students are keen on this idea and I should have no shortage of contributors. It is also apparent that the students would be able to do most of the organising.

There is a group in the area who are initiating a community newspaper. I think Huntingdale Tech is involved and there are a number of people at Huntingdale High who have expressed interest. Those are all the details I have at the moment. Something is afoot!

I hope that you continue to obtain support from interested parties. Keep up the good work. Any advice, suggestions would be most welcome.

Brian Wise,  
Oakleigh High School,  
Highland Ave.,  
North Clayton 3168.

Enclosed is my subscription to CONNECT. I've thought about it often as an idea and I thoroughly approve, although I confess I'm not mad about its name. I like LINK better but I've left that pretty late to tell you. It certainly isn't as heavy as EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION, I'll give you that.

The first issue arrived at work a bit like a psychic phenomenon. I'd been thinking constantly while working on the Kids' Issue, what a pleasure it would be to produce and bring out a Kids' Issue three times a year, providing a venue for all kinds of schools and all age groups.

I mentioned this to the Schools Commission director of Innovations one night and he said - "that's 15 years away." Why? Why not 2000? Why not now?

There's a lot of meat in CONNECT No. 2. The "Bludgers" piece is really impressive I think - as an initiative and in the clarity of its goals and perceived outcomes.

I keep discovering the same quality in all the real "innovators", sometime in our conversation I hear the phrase "I/we got so much out of the project myself/ourselves." It's a good argument for selfishness over altruism.

The themes for INNOVATIONS magazine this year, 3 of them, are:

1. Local curriculum initiatives;
2. Aboriginal education;
3. Kids' Issue (2)

EDUCATIONAL INNOVATIONS is sent to all Victorian schools, and is published by:

Innovations News Exchange,  
123 Church Street,  
Richmond 3121 Telephone (03) 428.1411

It is a Schools Commission project, and contributions are invited from students, teachers, parents and others.

Shirley Cass,  
Innovations News Exchange,  
Richmond 3121.

Please accept my apologies for the lateness of this letter. CROSS AGE was in the process of changing and I hadn't really sorted out where I wanted it to go.

What I've enclosed is the explanation of the new Community Action Team (son of Cross-Age Tutoring). This should explain it reasonable well. (*See elsewhere this issue - RH*). At present I'm in the process of trying to actually arrange places. So what I hope for, as represented by the sheet, and what actually happens, may actually be different. Perhaps it would be better to wait and see.

You asked me about other Cross-Age programs. Do you know about Richmond Technical School? They've published a very full explanation and evaluation. (Available from School of Education, LaTrobe University.)

Joan Morris,  
Sunshine High School,  
460 Ballarat Rd.,  
Sunshine 3020.

I am not sure who to thank for the copy of CONNECT No. 2, but it is very interesting and much appreciated. Having spent some time in some of the inner city schools and close in suburb schools of Melbourne, it is good to see that many of the ideas from the early 70s have grown and developed. (*Article on 2WEB-FM elsewhere in this issue.*)

David French,  
Manager,  
2WEB-FM,  
PO Box 594,  
Bourke NSW 2840.

Our program is just being established, so I can't report relevant projects yet - may be later. I do intend to have students involved in a number of school and community projects, though at this stage not formally in the program decision-making process. This, too, may change later.

I am preparing an article for our local press, regarding some aspects of the developing program, and will attempt to use this as a base for an article suitable for CONNECT.

Ian Maynard,  
The Heights School,  
Brunel Drive,  
Modbury Heights 5092. SA





# 2WEB

WESTERN EDUCATION BROADCASTING

PO Box 594, Bourke, NSW 2840

Telephone 068 722 333

## PROJECTS:

At present I am an ex-teacher managing a unique Public Radio Station (you know - not the ABC; not commercial; but REAL!! radio operated by volunteers from the community.) The station I work for is 2 WEB, which has studios at Bourke High School, (yes, Bourke has schools - 4 in fact) and broadcasts to about one third of NSW.

2WEB was established because of the need for a local broadcasting station in far Western New South Wales, and as a Public Radio Station with an Educational Licence, an opportunity is offered for the community and schools to become involved in broadcasting. Within the broadcasting area, schools participate in the production and selection of programs. Each school is visited regularly by staff members from the station who help in training staff and students in radio production methods and who collect the finished taped programs. The material made ranges from nursery rhymes (from Year 2) to readings of Chaucer in Old English (by several teachers). Each group is encouraged to design their own programs, and to experiment in areas that interest them; 2 WEB's staff do not make the programs for them. In this way, each individual learns more of the radio medium, and perhaps in doing this, develops their self confidence, communication skills and in some way makes school more interesting. These are all objectives of this project.

It is perhaps relevant to state the original objectives of this project, as presented to the Management Committee of DCAP (Disadvantaged Country Area Program), in the first request for funding, and to the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal in the application for the Broadcasting Licence. These are:

- \* Enrich the educational experience of isolated children and relieve the disadvantage of remoteness from the formal school atmosphere;
- \* Develop children's communication skills by actively involving them in program production, announcing and technical aspects of the station;
- \* Provide an alternative educational and cultural approach to mass media. This will encourage children to become discerning consumers of media through their understanding of the techniques employed;
- \* Fill a gap in existing communication services in the area by providing a locally oriented service that people can identify with;
- \* Promote school involvement in community activities by offering a more comprehensive information service to the public.

Since the first suggestion to build a radio station in 1977, the studios have been built, staff and volunteers trained, and broadcasting commenced (on 13 October 1978), over 200 members of the community and schools have become involved as program announcers and producers.

Also workshops for children and adults have been run, music concerts with local groups and imports (Don Burrows for 15 days) organised and seventy hours of broadcast achieved each week. One special training program was for Aboriginal adults run by 2 WEB over a two week period in conjunction with the Commonwealth Department of Education and the Film and Television school.

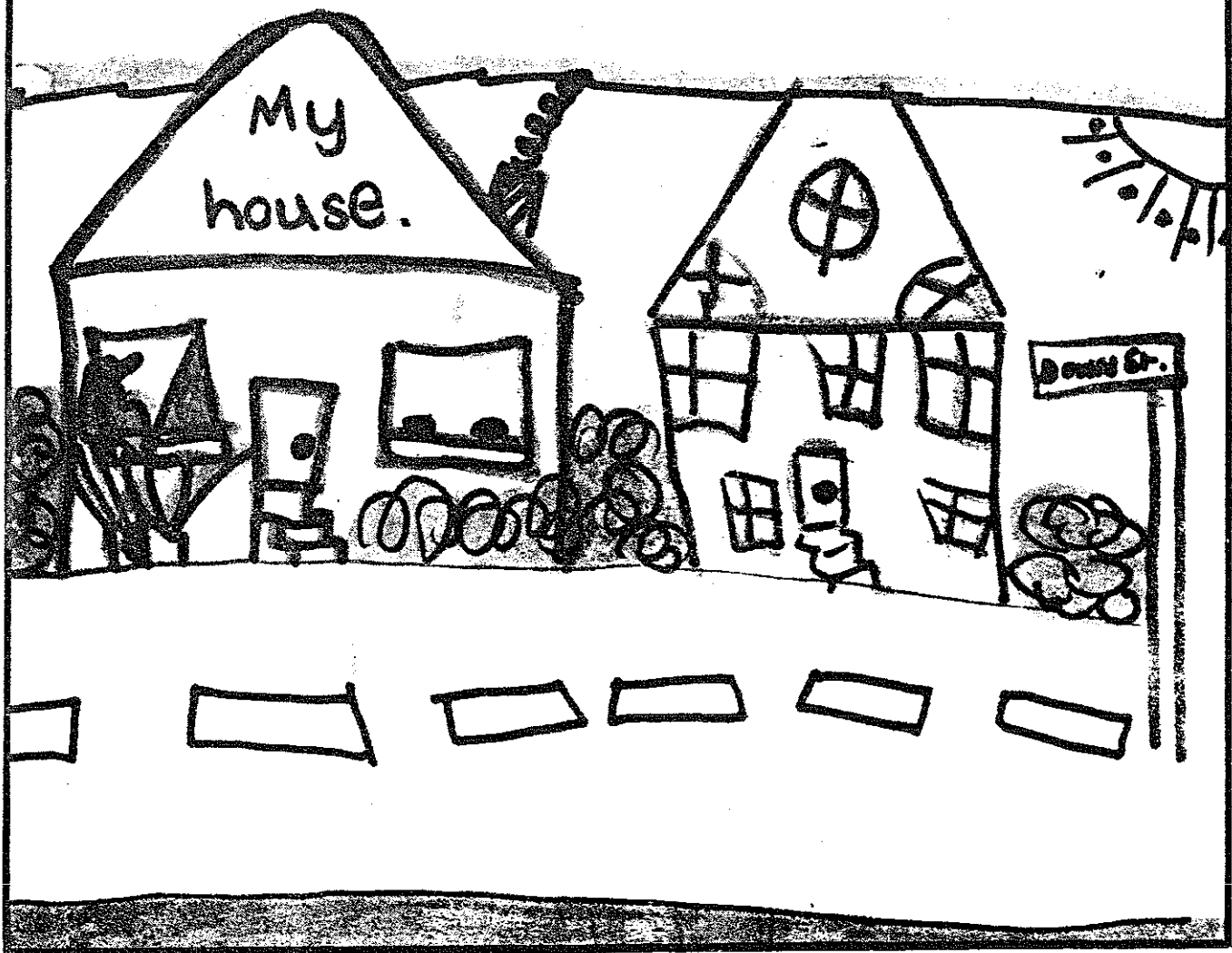
Now in 1980, 2 WEB looks forward to continuing its involvement with western NSW and we hope to maintain the involvement of children and adults with the station.

If anyone would like more information about this project, you are welcome to contact me. 2 WEB is the only school-based broadcasting station in Australia at present; perhaps some CONNECT readers may be able to change that.

David French,  
Manager, 2 WEB

# BRUNSWICK

A LONG WAY FROM THE BUSH



"Brunswick, A Long Way From the Bush" is a collection of children's works - poetry, prose and drawings. The children involved were from Brunswick North Primary School. The theme of the works is "life in Brunswick".

I would love to say that the book is the fruit of many workers with a great participation of students and others in the production - but the truth is that the impetus and hard work was from a handful of teachers. However, most kids contributed to the book, many getting excited by both the idea and the result.

The book contains some very honest statements by kids about their environment:

Brunswick  
big tough  
yucky big fights.  
The cars do wheelies  
in the road.

Con L. and Angelo K.

And what about this one from Sophie I.?

I was standing outside looking at Brunswick.  
I said to myself "Brunswick, Brunswick, I love you."  
But then the traffic came.  
But I still said the same thing:  
"Oh, Brunswick, Brunswick, I love you forever."

We received a small grant from the State International Year of the Child Committee towards the cost of publication of the book. The whole effort was rather rushed in third term so it was necessary to employ a person to arrange typesetting, do lay-out and arrange printing. However, for 1980, things are going to be different. We are already planning this year's production, which we hope to be a joint production with a South Melbourne Primary School\*.

It is envisaged that teachers, parents and hopefully kids, will be involved in the actual production this year. But we all have a lot to learn.

Anyone who has any suggestions for us, or helpful advice would be greatly appreciated.

Please contact: Heather Eagleson,  
Brunswick North Primary School,  
Pearson Street,  
Brunswick West. 3055. Ph: (03)386.8212 (wk)

Copies of our book, Brunswick, A Long Way From The Bush, are also available from the above address, at a cost of \$1.25 each.

Heather Eagleson.

\* On The Go is a similar volume of prose, poetry, drawings and photographs, written entirely by the students of Dorcas Street Primary School in South Melbourne. "It is written in the three main language groups of our school - English, Greek and Turkish." Copies are available from the school.

## The Golden Shaft: Wins Award

The Golden Shaft (see CONNECT 2) has won the Shell Co. award for creative writing. The following accounts are of the presentation of the award:

### THE IMPORTANT NIGHT

I knew as soon as I heard about the awards night, that I wanted to go, just to see what it would be like and also to be able to boast of representing the school at Dallas Brookes Hall. At the time I did not realise it would be the Australian Literary Awards 1979.

I had looked forward to the day for twelve days, and when it finally came I was happy. I found out that Sharon Brown was to accompany me to the awards with Mr Martin. I didn't know what to expect. Then 3.40 came and the bell rang and best wishes came from several students.

We finally arrived in Brunswick at about 5.30. We were at the house of Mr Martin's sister, Mrs Milne. She was a nice person and I liked her and her family. They were very nice people. We got dressed and were ready to leave for Dallas Brookes Hall at 6 o'clock. We arrived there and checked off our names and then received name tags. Quite a crowd had gathered by seven o'clock and everyone there seemed to know somebody. Everybody mixed with each other except for us. We kept to ourselves and stood against a wall. Then a lady approached Mr Martin, Sharon and me and introduced us to some people. I didn't tell anybody, but I felt very small amongst all those people and not knowing anybody. I felt like nobody standing among those people of society, and not even being noticed. But I felt better when I was introduced to somebody and had somebody to converse with.

We filed into the hall at 7.20 and took up our seating at table 10. We listened to the introduction and then a lady sang two poems. Fortunately we were sitting at a table with sociable people. The lady on my left was a Collingwood supporter and that was the subject of which we spoke for most of the evening.

They announced some awards and we then had the first course of a four-course meal. We had soup. Then they announced some more awards. One of them went to a young man sitting at our table, Paul Hutchison, for his poem "Fencing the barbed wire farm". It was a good poem, dedicated to his parents.

Then we had our second course which consisted of ham-steak, beans, apricot, fried tomato, roast potato and gravy. It was good. Then they finally got around to our award - the Shell Company award for creative writing. We won this and collected a cheque for \$125 and a book worth \$250: it was a limited edition. Sharon and I went up and received the award, and I asked if I could say a few words. The man on the platform replied, "Certainly."

I then went on to make myself the biggest fool in the room. I took my stand at the microphone and stated:

"I would like to thank Mr John Martin, who without this book, wouldn't be." Everyone laughed, and I didn't realise what they were laughing at until I sat down and thought about what I had said. I laughed at myself. The man announced that the book, THE GOLDEN SHAFT would be on sale for \$6 during the evening. We then watched more awards and Paul Hutchison win another award for being an unpublished writer.

We then ate dessert and it was a sort of cream cake. I enjoyed it. We listened to more awards and then we listened to a Professor talk about the early settlers. He was boring to listen to but made some interesting points. It then finished but we waited to see if we could sell some books. We sold three books which Sharon and I both autographed. It was good to have someone notice me. We signed a book for a mad man named Rick, who was president of the Croydon Football Club. He was a real wood-duck. He mouthed off at the Professor while he spoke.

Overall, it was a very enjoyable evening, in which I met people different from people you meet everyday. The Professor came over and congratulated me on my fabulous speech. I was very grateful to him and thought that he had the makings of a real man in that he did not snub anyone. He treated everyone equally. I admired him. I was thankful to Mr Martin for giving me the chance to see what it would be like to accept an award. Mr Martin's sister was very hospitable and offered us to stay the weekend and go and see the football. But we returned the next morning and that is one night I will never forget for as long as I live.

Peter Yordonopulo  
Year 9E  
Ballarat East High School

THE GOLDEN SHAFT means a lot to me and many other students. Many students had the opportunity to have their work in a real book and I was one of them. To see your work in a book is a good feeling of accomplishment and work. There was a lot of work put in THE GOLDEN SHAFT and to win an award for it was terrific.

Sharon Brown  
Year 11A  
Ballarat East High School

## Publication Projects: Update

*This issue, we not only bring you news of some further projects we are in touch with, but also bring some further news of projects we have mentioned before:*

### Overseas:

TIMBER WINDS, Corbett High School, Route 2, Box 1480, Corbett, Oregon 97019, USA  
WASHINGTON SQUARE, Rusk Middle School, 411 North Mound, Nacogdoches, Texas 75961, USA

### Australian:

BRUNSWICK: A LONG WAY FROM THE BUSH, Brunswick North Primary School, Pearson Street, Brunswick 3055. (Heather Eagleson) *article in this issue.*

BRUNSWICK NORTH NEWS, Brunswick North Primary School. (above)

ON THE GO, Dorcas Street Primary School, Dorcas Street, South Melbourne.

THE KENTISH TIMES, Sheffield District High School, Henry St., Sheffield 7306 Tas.  
(Mr J R H French) - a community newspaper produced and printed in the Sheffield School.

THE WESTERN MIRROR, Western Youth Welfare Service, 259 Ascot Vale Rd., Ascot Vale 3032. (Barry McDonald).

The WESTERN MIRROR comes out three times a year. The third issue last year had 80 jam-packed foolscap pages, plus a three-colour silk-screen cover - "all our own work", says Barry. Copies may be obtained from the above address. The second week prior to the end of term is the closing date for articles/stories/poems/drawings.

YABBERSTICK, Princes Hill High School, Arnold Street, North Carlton 3054 (Carmel McKenzie, Melinda Beacham):

YABBERSTICK is about to resume production as a newspaper. Students applied for, and received, a Supplementary Grant for 1980. Layout on the first issue is expected as CONNECT goes to press.

BROADMEADOWS SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PROJECT, 40 Phillip St., Dallas 3047 (Karen Carkner)

The first issue of a community paper produced by schools in the Broadmeadows area was put together a couple of weekends ago, and copies are expected any time.

ESSENDON HIGH SCHOOL, Buckley St., Essendon 3040. (Lorna Dee).

The first issue of their newspaper is about to be produced.

# CROSS-AGE TUTORING

The following list of cross-age tutoring programs has been compiled from contacts with CONNECT and from contacts with Dr. Tony Knight. The schools have been written to, and where possible annotated:

Ballam Park Technical School: *article elsewhere in this issue.*  
Baltara School: *article in next issue.*  
Brunswick East High School: *article in CONNECT 2; another to follow.*  
Lalor Park Primary School: *article elsewhere in this issue.*  
Macleod West Technical School  
Princes Hill High School: *article in CONNECT 2; updated in the next issue.*  
Richmond Girls High School  
Richmond Technical School: *comprehensive report available from Dr Tony Knight.*  
Ruthven Primary School  
Sunshine High School: *article elsewhere in this issue.*  
Thomastown Primary School: *article in CONNECT 2.*  
View Bank Primary School

All of these programs are in Victoria - if you know of other programs, in Victoria, or especially, in other states, I'd be grateful to even hear of their existence. An article would be even better.

Roger Holdsworth

## CAT-SUNSHINE HIGH

Cross Age runs in the 9/10/11 Vertical scheme. It is 4 periods a week - 2 double periods. Students choose between C.A.T., production of a weekly newspaper for the scheme, photography and art (I think). For all units, except Maths, there is this kind of choice in 9/10/11.

I have basically found primary schools extremely helpful. You need to be very specific about the possibilities of the ways kids can be used in Primary Schools. If you can get a Primary School teacher to help you, one who knows a fair bit about the theory behind Cross Age, you can provide lists of very specific activities. I don't think the tutors get a great deal out of it, in terms of literary development unless they are involved in planning and teaching of a particular activity with one or a small group of kids. If they are used simply to correct work or listen to kids read ad hoc, with no warning, forethought or preparation, I think the benefit is much more limited. Most Primary School teachers are prepared to make sure the kids know what they are doing the next week if this is stressed before. I don't think there's much value in the kids doing teacher-aide type jobs.

In the past, kids have gone to Primary School 2 periods a week and spent 2 periods a week doing theory/preparation at Sunshine High School.

C.A.T. - COMMUNITY ACTION TEAM - INFORMATION TO STUDENTS:

*In the past, this unit has been known as Cross Age Tutoring. The change is not simply a change in name. Cross Age Tutoring, as the name implies, is when older students tutor younger students. In this scheme I have generally placed you in primary schools as the kids in the primary schools see you as a teacher, student teacher or some other 'oldie', rather than that dumb third form kid.*

Never fear, Cross Age Tutoring is not dead! It has simply become one part of the new subject: Community Action Team. You can still do Cross Age in the new improved C.A.T. However, you can also do some other things as well!

Some of the places I hope to get you into include kindergartens, F.I.T. (Footscray Institute of Technology), old peoples' homes, handicapped people's homes/schools. If you have any other ideas, let me know! I hope that you will be involved in:

1. a teaching role;
2. a more general helping role as in old people's homes;
3. typists;
4. librarians;
5. teachers' aides; in the various institutions.

Why has it changed?

The aims of Cross Age were and still are:

1. to improve your expression, spelling and writing by having to teach other people;
2. to give you experience of the work place;
3. to give you experience of coping/dealing with adults on an equal footing;
4. to help you become more responsible.

These aims are good ones but not everyone wants that much responsibility, not everyone likes little kids. Lots of kids last year said they were interested in working with people but not necessarily as teachers of young kids. However, this unit is not work experience either. Although work experience is one part of it as it is in Cross Age, it is not the most important part. The aim is to give you some understanding of different groups in the community that tend to be separated from each other - all in nice little boxes safe and sound from each other.

9/10/11 tries to break down the boxes within this High School by mixing up the ages. C.A.T. attempts to give you contact with people you wouldn't otherwise meet. It is essentially selfish, aiming to give you something. If other people benefit in the process, that is good. It is not meant to teach you to be kind, it is for you to decide what you think and feel about the whole thing!

Another thing I was thinking about when starting this unit was that with youth employment the way it is, a responsible government might in future provide employment in areas such as you will be working in. Even if we never do get such a government, perhaps your experience now will help you in future during any unemployed stints in enjoyable (if unpaid) activity when you might otherwise be bored out of your brain.

So ends my sermon.

I've just finished doing some placing of kids. So far they are at kinders, creches, student information office at F.I.T. (union), primary schools, Sunshine House for the mentally handicapped.

Joan Morris,  
Sunshine High School,  
460 Ballarat Rd.,  
Sunshine 3020.

## LALOR PARK PRIMARY

### INTRA-SCHOOL CROSS-AGE TUTORING

#### BRIEF HISTORY

A Cross-Age Tutoring Program has existed in one form or another at Lalor Park Primary School for approximately five years.

The program was originally introduced, implemented and coordinated by two members of the Lalor/Thomastown Area Study Team, Lionel Buttner and Sue Kellond.

In 1979, with both of the previously mentioned teachers having left the staff, I was appointed as the Cross-Age Tutoring Co-ordinator.

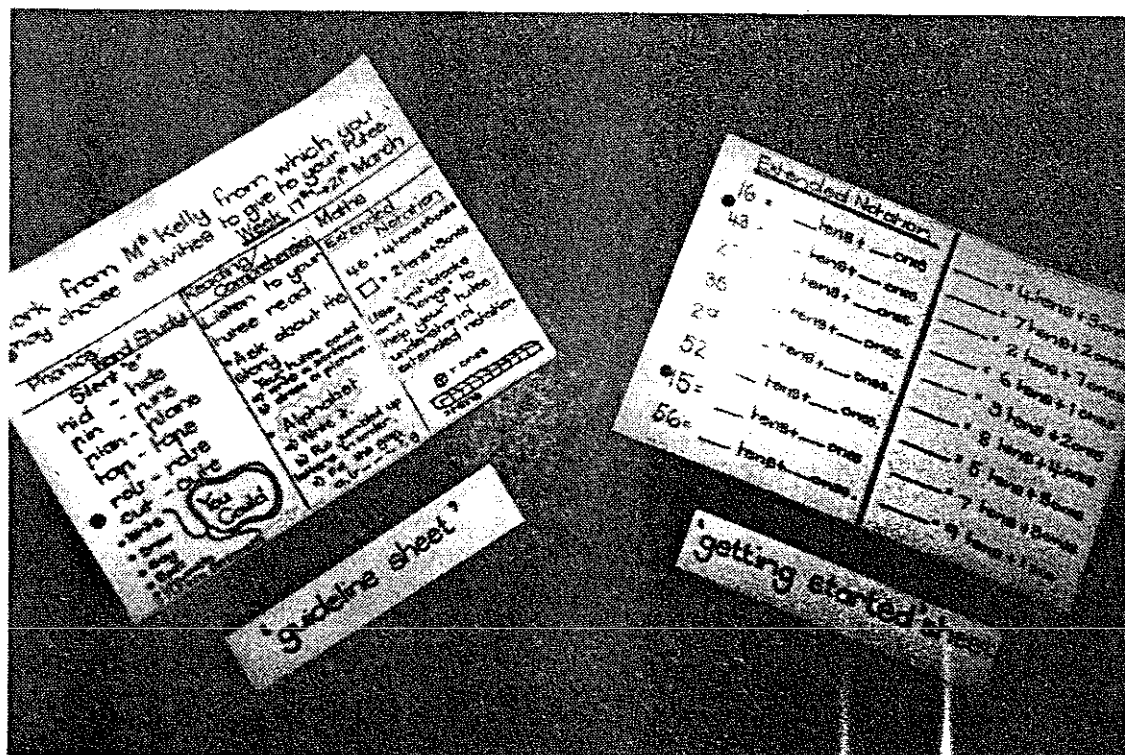
## MODIFICATIONS

Since the Cross-Age Program was first introduced, the internal time-tabling of the school had considerably changed. With the complexity of specialist timetabling, many teachers were hesitant to allow Cross-Age Tutoring to continue in their classrooms in 1979. Although many teachers were keen on the scheme, they felt they just could not allocate the time for the Tutoring Session and the time for tutor coaching by the Co-ordinator.

After a few 'think sessions', a scheme evolved that seemed acceptable to many of the classroom teachers. This modified program was introduced during 1979 and it is, along with a few basic refinements, operating once again in 1980.

### THE PROGRAM 1979

It had been the practice of the Co-ordinator to meet with the tutors and to coach them in the work to be given during the next tutoring session. In 1979, the eight classroom teachers involved in the Cross-Age program were reluctant to allocate the  $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$  of an hour that this session required. The compromise that evolved operated as follows: Each week, the tutee's teacher received a 'program sheet' upon which they had to note down what they wished the tutors to revise during the forthcoming tutoring session. I, as the Cross-Age Co-ordinator, then elaborated slightly upon the original jottings, adding word attack suggestions, and eventually producing a tutor 'Guideline Sheet'. As well as this weekly 'Guideline Sheet', I chose some particular aspect of the work that needed revision and produced a 'Getting Organised'/'Getting Started' sheet. This was designed to (and in fact did serve to) immediately organise a disorganised tutor. It also set the tutee to work immediately so boredom and misbehaviour would not eventuate. Initially, I was slightly worried that the tutor would become too dependent on these 'Getting Started' sheets, and would not prepare any other work for the tutoring session. However, this did not occur. Because the 'Getting Started' sheets were designed to take up only a small proportion of the tutoring session, the tutors naturally had to prepare work to give to the tutee during the remainder of the tutoring session. Ideas for this extra work, they lifted from their weekly 'Guideline Sheet'.







Although I realised the practical impossibility of including formal coaching sessions in the tutoring program, the fact that there existed little tutor/co-ordinator face-to-face contact/discussion time worried me somewhat. However, I found that the supportive work by the classroom teacher helped overcome, to a great extent, this problem. Most tutors' teachers, realising that the tutors needed clarification of various facets of their "Guideline Sheets", allocated short periods of time for explanation and encouragement purposes. Naturally, I was available at various timetabled times to answer queries, to counsel and to supply materials such as flashcards, workbooks and extra worksheets. To keep interest high, every month or so (working on feedback from tutoring sessions, correction of tutoring booklets and classroom teacher suggestions) the cross-age session would be cancelled, and a motivational session for each grade of tutors would be run. These motivational sessions dealt with areas such as correct filling-out of tutoring booklets, varying activities to ensure that tutees remained interested, how to make learning games, etc. All these schemes, it was found, more than adequately compensated for that  $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$  hour face-to-face coaching session. In fact it was felt that the introduction of the weekly "Guideline Sheet" raised the quality of the tutor's efforts, because it gave them a definite and easily interpretable guideline from which they could prepare appropriate work to give their tutee.

#### THE PROGRAM 1980

As we found the modifications worked, we maintained the basic 1979 program format.

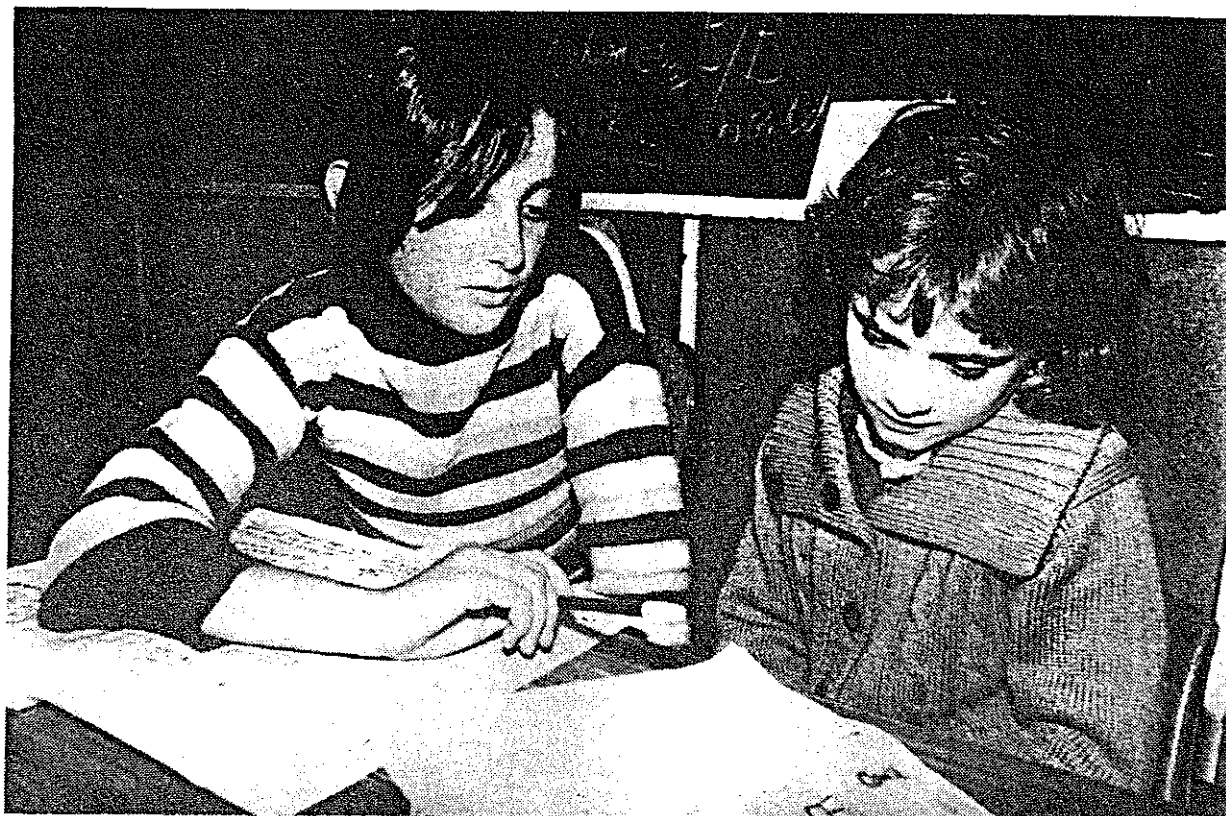
We have ten grades participating in the Intra-School Cross-Age Program. The 1980 Intra-School Program set-up is as follows:

Two grade 5s are working with two grade 3s;

A grade 4 is working with a family group of Prep and grade 1; and

Two grade 4s are working with two family groupings of grades 1 and 2.

All grades (except one which runs an hour tutoring session per week) have opted to participate in one half hour tutoring session per week. All grades have nominated a non-compulsory "consultation time" when their tutors may approach me (if time permits) over matters pertaining to a just completed or a forthcoming tutoring session. All tutors' teachers have allocated a short preparation/organisation period sometime before and also shortly after the tutoring session, so that the tutors may complete their tutoring booklet.



This booklet was designed as a mini work-evaluation program. A tutor must show in his/her booklet a clear outline of what work he/she plans to give to the tutee. The tutors are also expected to write an evaluation which deals with the tutee performance, the success of the tutoring session and how perhaps they can improve or help the tutee in the next session. I, as Co-ordinator, check these booklets, making necessary corrections, offering suggestions, and encouraging tutors to continue their good work. Naturally enough, the standard of booklet expertise varies, but all that is asked of a tutor is to work to the best of his/her capabilities.

At this early stage of the year, enthusiasm is high. There exists a very good standard of tutor/tutee rapport. Classroom teachers are providing the necessary encouragement and reinforcement to ensure that the tutoring program is looked forward to, and is well prepared for. I hope this high standard will continue throughout 1980.

It is hard to measure the success of a program such as Cross-Age Tutoring. It involves many "non-testable" yet readily observable improvements in child self-esteem, organisational ability and overall maturity change. It promotes social interaction (generating tolerance and understanding) between the upper and lower children of a comparatively large school which often spills over from the classroom into playground.

Perhaps some indication of what the tutoring program means to the participants may be gleaned from the following comments made by tutors and tutees at the end of the 1979 Cross-Age Tutoring year. "Out of the mouths of babes" one may say.

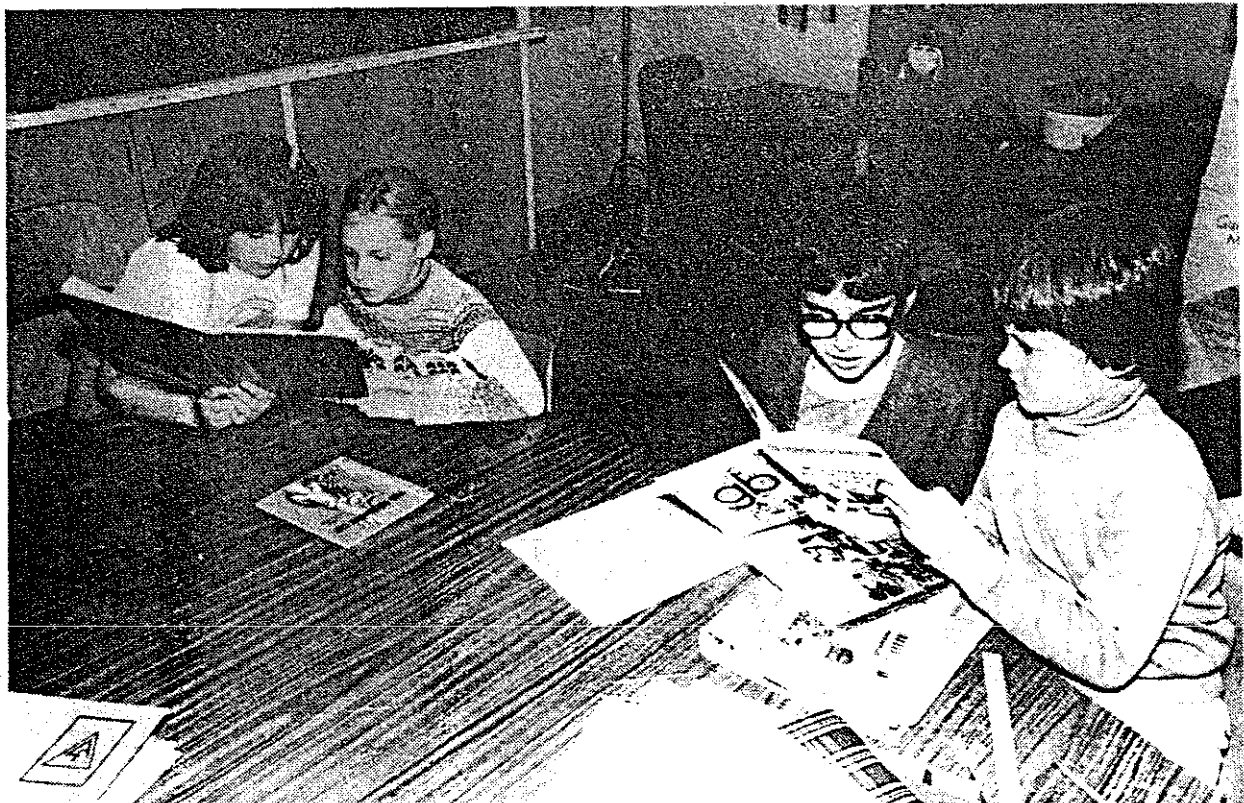
*My name is Jimmy A. (grade 5). My tutee's name is Anna-Maria ...  
At first I was embarrassed having a girl for a tutee, but now I'm  
not so embarrassed. Sometimes she would turn round and talk to  
her friend, so I prepared lots of different work to give her.  
Now she works quickly and quietly.  
At first I didn't know how to fill in my tutoring booklet, but I  
gradually learnt how to do it.*

My name is Sonia (grade 5). My tutee's name is Jodie. The first few weeks I tutored scared me because I wasn't quite sure what to do. Then, as the weeks went past, it got easy. At first Jodie could not read so good, but then she really improved her reading. She was scared, but I tried to be patient and kind, and she got used to me and did some good work. Mrs Whyte has helped me by giving us ideas about what we can do in our tutoring sessions.

.....  
My name is Nadia C. My tutor's name is Marilyn.  
Marilyn gives me maths. It is hard work, but most of the time I get it right.  
Sometimes we play word games.  
Sometimes we play 'Hang-the-Butcher' with spelling words.  
When I don't know how to do some of my work, Marilyn always helps me. Marilyn is always kind to me.

.....  
My name is Marianne P. My tutor is Anna D. Anna gives me easy work. She gives me spelling, maths and sometimes dictation. I like doing  $x$ ,  $+$  and  $-$  sums, all the sums she gives me. Anna explains things when I don't understand. She hears me lots of pages when I read. When I do my worksheet, she prepares more work for me to do when I'm finished. I always have lots of work to do.

.....  
My name is Theresa M.  
This year I started tutoring. My tutee's name is Grazyna.  
At first, tutoring was a bit hard, but as the year went on, I started working better with my tutee.  
Every month, Mrs Whyte, our tutoring teacher, collects and corrects our tutoring booklets.  
My tutee has been improving every month.  
Sometimes I used to give games like Tic-Tac-Toe to my tutee.  
Usually I give her hard work to do.  
Tutoring makes me feel like being a teacher.





Gemma Whyte,  
Cross-Age Tutoring  
Coordinator,  
Lalor Park Primary School,  
Linoak Ave.,  
Lalor. 3075.



# BALLAM PARK TECHNICAL - TEACHER AIDE PROGRAM

The program has been running for two years and some 50 teacher aides from years 8 to 11 are involved at Naranga Special School, Ballam Park Primary School and Karingal Heights Primary School.

The major purpose of the program is to improve the self-concept of the teacher aide by letting the child discover that he can be useful and responsible. It is hypothesized that by raising a student's self-esteem, a resultant improvement in attitude to many aspects of school involvement is evident.

In evaluating our program we have used a pre-test which is a measure of student self-concept and is point scored. The dimensions employed include peer group relationships, scholastic attitudes, family relationships and general self-esteem.

Additionally, a formative evaluation which comprises data obtained from direct observation, discussion and checklists is carried out.

Finally, a post-test (same as the pre-test) is given to the teacher aides at the conclusion of the program (one term) to compare their score of self-concept with their initial rating.

The scores of all the teacher aides would then be compared to a 'control' of Ballam Park Technical School students who were not teacher aides. If there was an appreciable difference, it may be concluded that the teacher aide program does improve student self-image which leads to improved competence, and a more meaningful role in school would lead to an increased commitment to education.

I hope the above will give you some insight into our program which is currently being trialled and would be pleased to forward any additional details to you upon request.

The following are aims and some further details of the program:

## AIMS, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### A: Ultimate Goals of Teacher Aide Program

The major goal of this teacher aide program is to improve or develop student self-concept by providing both the opportunity and experience to a group of selected students to teach and assist other students which will generally be of a different age group.

This goal is based on the concept that children effectively teach children and in the process individual self-esteem is raised with a resultant improvement in attitude to many aspects of school involvement.

### B: Mediate Goals or Long Term Objectives of the Program (Affective Domain only)

- a. To stimulate interest in learning through working as a teacher aide;
- b. To develop opinions about the value of education;
- c. To develop attributes of independence and responsibility towards learning.

### C: Proximate Goals or Immediate Objectives of the Program

- a. i Increase student commitment to schooling processes via involvement and 'having a stake' in those processes;
- ii Increase student retention rate;
- iii To improve absenteeism and 'behavioural problems';
- b. i To give the student wider career aspirations;
- c. i To increase motivation for school success due to relevant role model.



## SELECTION OF LEARNING EXPERIENCES

### A: Broad Learning Experiences

Teacher aides (13 - 16 year old):

- i Will be working with students from preps up to grade six;
- ii Will experience multigrade open structured classrooms and compare them to single grade/single teacher classrooms;
- iii May evidence team teaching and the benefits and drawbacks of this type of teaching;
- iv Who may be interested in teaching as a career can experience at first hand the principles of teaching as applied in the classroom;
- v Will obtain confidence which it is hoped will help develop their self-concept particularly in relation to how they see themselves at 'school';
- vi Will increase their capacity to communicate and will be able to relate more to adults and younger children;
- vii Will be required to complete checklists from direct observations to evaluate the effectiveness of their learning experiences; and
- viii Will be asked at the end of the program to write a report on their experiences as a teacher-aide including their thoughts and suggestions for improvement in the teacher-aide program.

### B: Less General Learning Experiences

Teacher aides:

- i May be involved in classroom activities or preparation of resources both in and outside of the classroom as directed by the teacher; and
- ii Are expected to relate verbally their classroom experiences accurately so that the program objectives may be evaluated.

### C: Learning Experiences at Classroom Level

Teacher aides:

- i Could be working with a single pupil, small groups or the class as a whole;
- ii Will compare the effectiveness of different class activities and assess the effectiveness of their classroom instruction;
- iii Will listen to students reading;
- iv Mark and correct student work;
- v Help explain classroom work; and
- vi Answering questions and assisting the classroom teacher wherever possible.

Note: It is not possible to list every learning experience that a teacher aide may encounter as this will vary greatly from classroom to classroom. The interaction between pupil and teacher-aide is the key learning experience in this program.

Vic Wilson,  
Ballam Park Technical School,  
Belar Ave.,  
Frankston 3199.



# STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT

## 3-4-5 ADDS UP - SUNSHINE HIGH

What is the student's role in decision-making? This question has been asked by both students and educators, and the answer is not a simple one. Before students can participate in the decision-making process, the conservative elements in the Education Department must be convinced that students are competent enough to participate in decision-making. Because of the nature of society and the Education System, this will be a difficult task.

The traditional view of the role of schools is to answer that students have learnt the three Rs (reading, writing and arithmetic). *In the traditional view of schools, decision-making on the part of students has no place.* Student involvement in politics and decision-making should commence when they are old enough to vote. Even when students are old enough to vote, they have very little say in decisions made by the government they elect.

The electors do vote those governments into office, but once a government is elected, the general public has no real say in the decisions made by its government. So, in fact, within the socio-political structure that exists in Australia, the average person never acquires experience in decision-making. A small section of society do involve themselves in decision-making. They join Mothers' Clubs, or the Executive Committee of the local Social Club. Or, if they are high enough up the social ladder, they might belong to a powerful economic or political pressure group.

But this is only a small section of the community. *If our society is to become truly democratic, the majority of the citizens of Australia must have first-hand experience of the decision-making process.* Our existing education system provides the perfect vehicle for the realisation of this objective.

When a student reaches the magical age of eighteen, he is expected to exercise his democratic right, and vote. Even though this student has probably never been given the opportunity to participate in activities which involve his right to vote. Educators would argue that students are taught the principles of democracy in school. This involves,

*for the most part, the introduction of certain stereotyped materials about democracy in history, civics, social studies or political science courses. \**

This is an inadequate and inefficient method.

*The democratic way of life cannot be taught merely through the introduction of various theories about democracy in the curriculum. It is, of course, important to inform children and youth regarding democracy's origins and ideals, but this provides no assurance that students thus informed will automatically acquire democratic habits and loyalties. \**

These democratic habits and loyalties will be of vital importance to the people of this nation in the future. Towards the end of this century, the democratic way of life will face a grave dilemma. At this present time, trends towards a powerful bureaucracy are clearly evident. This trend poses the problem of the erosion of our civil liberties. The maturing student must possess a certain degree of experience in the area of decision-making in order to combat this problem.

The Education System argues that it is instilling the necessary democratic beliefs in its students, through curricular activities. But what they do not seem to understand is that

the democratic way of life ... does not consist of a system of beliefs but rather a cluster of habits which in combination define one's character. In short, mere democratic indoctrination will not produce democratic citizens. \*

How can students become more involved in decision-making? At the present, there is only one opportunity. This is the School Council. In theory, it provides students with first-hand experience in decision-making. The constitution of the School Councils (which was written by the Education Department) guarantees equality to student representatives. They have the same voting rights as adult representatives on the Council. But in actual fact students are not equal.

Because of their lack of experience in the running of meetings, students are at a distinct disadvantage. Moreover, the presence of parents, teachers and the principal of the school is intimidating to the student representatives. They are frightened of the prospect of having to stand up in front of all those adults and ask questions. This inhibition prevents students from arguing about an issue under discussion which might interest them.

I have had first-hand experience in the running of a School Council. In 1975 I was one of the first students elected to a local School Council. It seemed to me that this method of involving students in decision-making was ineffectual. This experience convinced me that there had to be a better and simpler way to involve students in decision-making.

Before I explain my theory, it is necessary to describe the school system within which it was used. In 1977 at Sunshine High School, a revolutionary school structure was set up; it was known as the 3/4/5-vertical scheme. #

The most revolutionary aspect of this new scheme was the fact that Forms 3, 4 and 5 were to be integrated into the one form level. The number of students who enrolled in the 3/4/5 Scheme was 90, since not all eligible students wanted to be in the new scheme. The curriculum of 3/4/5 was different to that of the 'normal' schools. New subjects such as Spoken English (which involved students learning to speak confidently before large groups of people) were pioneered by the 3/4/5 Scheme.

Students in forms 3, 4 and 5 were integrated into the one form level in all subjects except mathematics. This scheme increased work-loads of teachers who taught in it, because in certain subjects they would have to provide different standards of work for their pupils. The 3/4/5-vertical scheme has been highly successful. 1979 marks the third year of its existence.

In 1978, following a great deal of urging by my social science teacher, Mr James Oakes, I developed a plan for a student/teacher system of government. *The staff-student government was known as the Congress of 3/4/5.* The Congress would not have been possible without the liberal support of the staff of 3/4/5.

My initial plan called for two representatives from each of the home groups which 3/4/5 had been divided into. These representatives would attend a Congress meeting once a week. This system proved unsuccessful: students did not like having to stay back after school on a regular basis. A roster system was then tried, but this also proved unsuccessful.

What then happened was that a group of between five and ten students, plus the staff of 3/4/5, regularly attended the meeting of the Congress. When an important issue was listed on the agenda for the next Congress, a large group of students would attend and vote on the issue. On one occasion, when an important issue was being debated, I recall between 30 and 50 students attending the Congress.

Thus the Congress is extremely democratic. No-one is forced to attend a meeting, but if they do they can vote on the issue under discussion. Students and teachers have an equal vote and an equal say on the issues being discussed. Students are not inhibited by the number or by the presence of their teachers.

The Congress is conducted in a similar manner to an ordinary meeting, except that in the place of a Chairman, the Congress has an Executive Committee. It is comprised of one teacher representative and one representative from each of the form levels integrated in 3/4/5. The Executive group meets more regularly than



the Congress and is responsible for preparing the agenda for Congress, conducting its meetings and carrying out its administrative tasks.

*The Congress is based on the assumption that students can behave in a responsible and intelligent manner. Teachers must be prepared (if they want to attempt their own Congress) to allow students to have a say in all the administrative and policy decisions made in their school. Teachers are*

*... frequently deterred from conducting experiments in youth participation on the grounds that mistakes will be made. These timid adults are, of course, right. Mistakes will be made. Mistakes are part of the learning process, as these same adults would admit if they were capable of honest self-analysis. \**

Congress is a success; students can participate in the decision-making process. They can behave in an intelligent and rational way.

All that students need is a chance, and if this democracy is to survive they must be given this chance.

John Martino,  
Sunshine High School,  
460 Ballarat Rd.,  
Sunshine 3020.

\* References:

The Democratic Way of Life: An American Interpretation (A Mentor book published by the New American Library)

The Urban School, ed. L. F. Claydon (Pitman Pacific Books): Part 1, Chapter 2 - "Locked In" or "Locked Out": The Powerlessness of the Student Role, by Tony Knight.

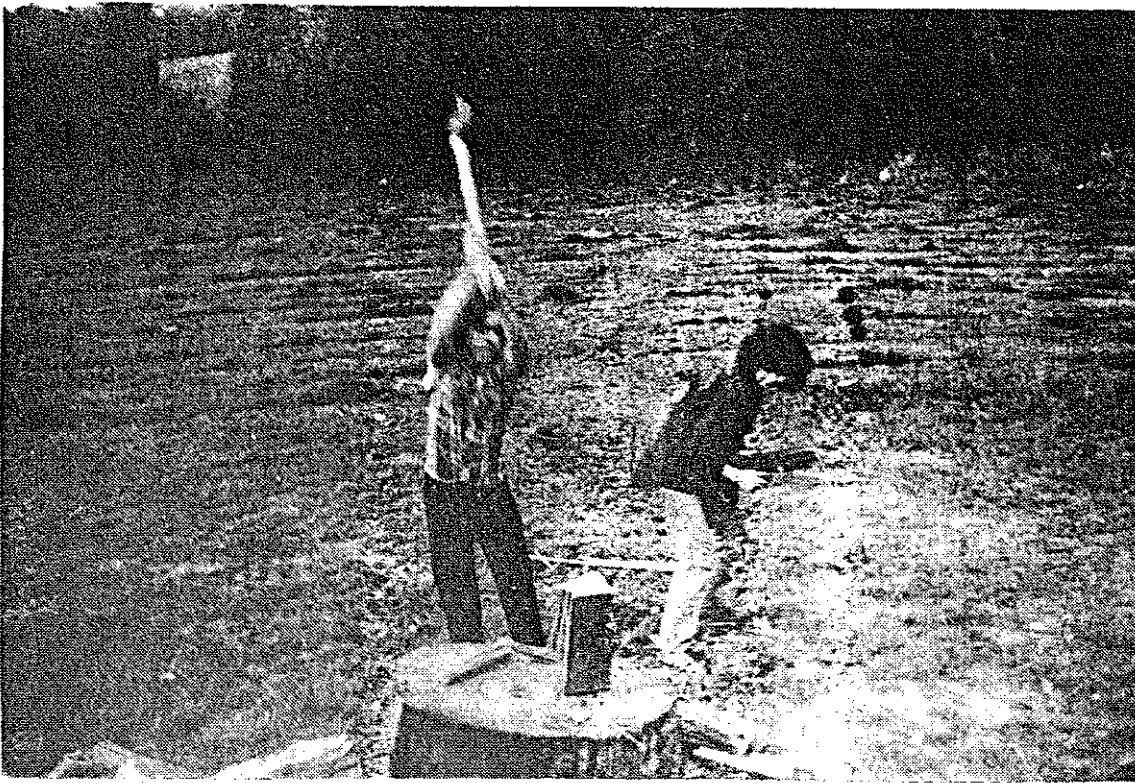
- # The 3/4/5-vertical scheme is now known as the Year 9/10/11-vertical scheme, and the report on C.A.T. elsewhere in this issue comes from that team. A full report on the operation of 3/4/5 is available from Sunshine High School (address above).

## FALCON ST ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOL

The school was founded in 1977 by a group of feminists. Two major aims were to implement counter-sexist education and to run the school on fully democratic lines. This meant that students, parents and teachers would all have equal say in all decision-making. General meetings are held once a fortnight, and this is when the whole school community can get together to discuss and make decisions on school policy. As well, we have weekly co-ordinating meetings, usually attended by students and teachers as these meetings are held in school time, but also open to any parents or friends who would like to take part. The following are some contributions of our thoughts on the kinds of decisions which have to be made and who makes them:

*Students' involvement in school decision-making is pretty important. For example, when we are getting new teachers, we interview them and decide whether we think they would be suitable. We can also decide whether to sack them.*

*Briget.*



Alicia and Simon at Falcon Street's January camp at Mittagong, NSW.

After the camp at Mittagong, we found there was so much talent in the school that we decided we would like to form a school band. Our music teacher, who was interviewed originally as a Geography teacher, really helped us get it together with home-made lagerphones, washboards and a tea-chest which was converted into a bass. Our music teacher is part of a professional band so he has many ideas and knows a few tricks. We had our first public performance at East Sydney Tech and it went down quite well.

Alicia.

When new students come to the school, there is always an interview which is conducted by the Co-ordinator and students who decide they would like to do the interview. After two weeks of the new student attending the school, there is a meeting of students and teachers to decide whether the new student is getting along at the school. The new student also decides if he likes it. If everybody agrees, then the new student is formally accepted into the school.

Bill.

An interesting example of student participation in decision-making arose recently. The Co-ordinator and two teachers had discussed the problem of one particular student's growing absenteeism. They were anxious to protect the feelings of the student and her parent and decided they would ask them to an interview to take place before the general meeting to be held the same evening. This was done. Later, at the general meeting, one student asked who had made the decision regarding the interview, and why this had been made only by the teachers and co-ordinator without students being consulted. We adults realised this was a reasonable question to ask, and the general consensus was then reached that there should be open group discussion about such matters.

It would be very easy for busy adults to make quick decisions without consulting anyone, but it would be a step backwards, and would leave authority in the hands of a few. I doubt whether Falcon Street could survive - or would want to survive - if this happened.

Vi.

Sometimes the need to make a decision immediately means that people don't get to talk out their opinions in a meeting, and this may lead to their feeling disappointed or misled. This is one of the problems in making decisions. Most important decisions are discussed at meetings and between students and teachers. So you have to keep your ears open all the time and not slack off. Although sometimes people miss out on making decisions on things, the responsibility for what happens is fairly evenly spread out in a large group like this.

Malcolm.



*Elliott and Lisa at Falcon Street's January camp  
at Mittagong, NSW.*

I think that from the above comments, it becomes pretty obvious that students play a major role in decision-making at Falcon Street, and that this could be anything from organising the time-table to deciding on the length of vacations. It can be a time-consuming business, but all-in-all it does seem to work!

Vi Spak,  
The Learning Community Centre,  
(Falcon Street Alternative  
High School),  
278 Liverpool Street,  
Darlinghurst 2010.

# SWINBURNE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Swinburne Community School is a small 'progressive' school of one hundred and five students ranging from form 3 to form 5. We have, effectively, nine staff members who between them, cover most of our teaching requirements. Our timetable is divided into three areas: Teams, Workshops and Electives. I'll handle these backwards:

Electives are, as the name implies, options that run every afternoon. They run either one afternoon for 12 weeks, or two a week for 6 weeks. Electives basically cover any subjects.

Workshops occupy the second half of the mornings and ensure that students get the 'core' subjects such as english, maths, etc.

Teams are a timetable area that many people may find very unfamiliar and as they are an integral part of student administrative participation within the school, I will go into a detailed explanation.

Teams meet for the first half of every morning. There are, at the moment, four teams of various sizes that are grouped so as to provide some common experience among their members. They have such eloquent names as Science, Social Issues and Creative Arts. Teams are permanent groups that fill a number of functions. They provide a time in which group programs can be worked out by the group that use them - that is to say, team programs are worked out in the individual teams through the processes of discussion and consensus. This does not always work. Sometimes a team will not be able to come to an agreement about their program and sometimes a team program may become completely staff initiated and lose many of its unique properties. These things are not very common but when they do occur, they normally result in the school having to seriously evaluate again the teams, but as teams provide a way of students being able to question the value of different activities rather than just choosing between options, the school has always seen them as too valuable an asset to lose.

Teams also ensure a personal one-to-one advisor who is available to every student for assistance in program formulation, personal problems and any other help the student may require.

Perhaps most importantly, teams provide a supportive, familiar group to encourage those less confident at speaking, to voice their views to the school, even if only through the team representative at the other various school meetings.

## PHILOSOPHY OF S.C.S.

The name Community School holds many different meanings for many different people and often much is expected merely on the basis of our name. The classic line begins, "Well, if you're a community school then ..." In the end, the name means nothing except what the school makes it mean and it must be remembered that Swinburne Community School is a constantly changing community of 115 individuals, some of whom express strong ideas about education and some of whom express none.

It is because of this that I find it very hard to express the philosophy of the school in relation to participation, or in fact, any part of the philosophy. The guiding philosophy regarding administration is more an unspoken agreement than a rigid dogma or, more precisely, it is the product of all the different philosophies held within the school.

I think it would be safe to describe, at least the central idea, something like:

*Every member of the school community - that is staff, students and parents - has a right to participate in every decision made within the school.*

This is not to say that everybody does contribute to every decision. In fact, any one decision would probably be made by a relatively small number of people. But we have, over the years, designed a number of systems, in the form of meetings, that allow every member of the school the opportunity to ratify any decision.

## ADMINISTRATION

The entire administration of the school is run through seven main instruments. These are:

Team meeting: once a week;  
School meeting: once a week after Team meeting;  
Management meeting: once a week;  
Planning meeting: once a month;  
Curriculum day: once a term;  
Staff meeting: once a week; and  
Staff responsibility areas: (soon to be taken over by staff/student/parent (?) groups).

Team meetings on Mondays discuss issues raised by the Bullsheit which is a weekly newsletter containing, among other things, points for discussion suggested by the previous Management meeting. The team point of view is then taken to the School meeting, which everybody is expected to attend, for further discussion and hopefully resolution through consensus.

Consensus, which is decision through discussion and compromise rather than voting, is applied to every meeting situation in the school although effective consensus in a meeting of 115 people is at times very difficult, although the pre-school meeting teams provide some form of pre-discussion and ensure that everyone's voice is heard, if only through their team representative (a student). If, during School meeting, a discussion does not seem to be getting very far, then it is referred to the Management meeting which, through its smaller size of normally 10 staff, 10 students, is far more effective at conducting meaningful and productive discussions. The Management meeting is a voluntary after-school meeting, chaired, like School meetings, by a student which, in all but purely administrative matters, refers its decisions back to school meetings or on to Planning meeting for ratification.

Planning meeting is again a voluntary meeting which meets at night once a month. It has a large parent attendance and through this three-fold representation, has become in many ways the ultimate authority of the school. Its specific functions are, as seems to be with most S.C.S. meetings, many, and often not formally defined. It serves, as I have mentioned, as a Senate of sorts, as a long-term planner, as a parent/school liaison and as a meeting to receive reports: budget, staffing, enrolments, etc.







The other main parent involvement in the administration is Curriculum Day, which is an all-day meeting held once a term to discuss the general direction and requirements of the curriculum in the school. Its normal output is through policies, documents and general attitudes which subsequent planning meetings are asked to adopt.

The only regular meetings which are 'closed' to any section of the school are staff meetings at which staff discuss such things as teaching methods, students and themselves. The staff meeting has no power of decision outside of the recommendations it often takes to the various other meetings.

The last of the administration areas that I mentioned earlier are the staff responsibility areas. These cover areas that need constant attention though encompass none but routine decisions. Examples of these areas are: bus maintenance, Education Department liaison, catering, curriculum etc. At the present time, each member of staff has a number of these areas to look after. We have been discussing and planning for a long time to organise student/parent/staff "admin" groups to relieve the staff of sole responsibility for these functions and at the time of writing we are just finalising names and times etc for these groups. The second half of Management meetings is devoted to routine reports from the various administration areas although it is a pity that few students attend during this time.

#### DISCIPLINE ETC

There are a few functions within schools that have traditionally been viewed as inevitably being performed by staff - things such as discipline and teaching method evaluation.

The procedures for handling both of these are very similar, so I shall describe that for discipline and then draw its parallels.

There is no discipline at S.C.S.; destructive behaviour of any nature has definite causes to which solutions can be found. We are adamant that nothing is achieved through punishment. General 'mucking about' has no more complex a solution than the anger of those who it directly or indirectly affects. Serious misbehaviour is dealt with first and foremost by the advisor of the offender, probably alerted by a number of student complaints, having a talk with the student to try and find causes and solutions to the problem. This step is extremely effective, even if it must be repeated several times.

If it does not work then, on the request of either the student or the advisor, the matter becomes the responsibility of the Management meeting. The emphasis of the matter shifts from solving the student's problem to solving the school's problem. It must be stressed though that this is a far from common situation. I can remember only three such cases in over two years at the school.

In that situation and with the matter having become public, the management meeting would be asking the student to seriously consider their commitment to the school, not just in the abstract, but in terms of classes, attendance and behaviour. If this fails, and I have no knowledge of any time at which it has, the matter becomes the responsibility of the whole school either through school or planning meetings. The school would have to consider very carefully whether it could afford to allow the student to remain and students may be asked to leave, though in the knowledge that if they are prepared to reconsider their commitment and demonstrate that attitude, their place may become available again.

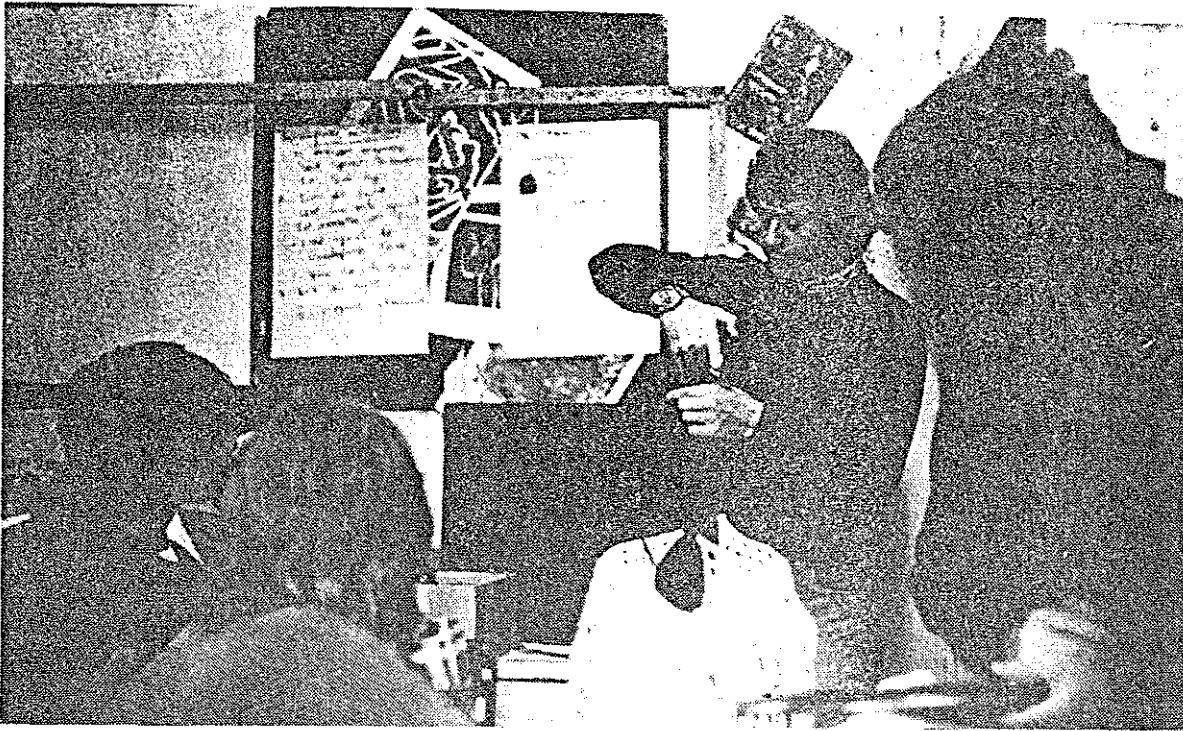
There is a very similar chain of events for dealing with student dissatisfaction about a staff member's teaching methods or in fact any other problems associated with any person's actions. That is, the problem is dealt with on a personal, private level until it becomes a very serious threat to the school.

#### PROBLEMS

There are, of course, problems associated with our system. Definitely there are the ones normally associated with consensus systems for example. There is a tendency in large meetings for discussion to involve, often, not more than twenty people, with the same people doing all the talking, while others get bored. Teams are an attempt to alleviate this by providing small supportive discussions so that, through the team representatives, every opinion is hopefully expressed. This does not solve the whole problem, and the issue remains a constant source of both staff, and more often, student dissatisfaction.

It is also morally very disturbing that although in terms of the above, the staff have no more authority or power than the students, a request for (let's say) quiet, from a teacher, holds a lot more weight than the same request from a student. At first glance this seems natural enough, but if one examines it closely, there is no reason for it within the procedures of S.C.S. It comes only through the pre-community school years of teacher domination. This is very unfortunate, and although it is not often seen as such, I think it one of the only obstacles to having in practice perfect student/staff equality.





The community school is in its ninth year. We have seen three different locations and three corresponding eras of the school.

This article is a description of the community school in April 1980. Each year the school changes in its population and all the systems and structure that I have described, change to varying extents, although keeping the same push behind them and their application.

PS: Several years ago, a survey run by an outside person revealed that 90% of the student population felt strongly that they had the power to make decisions within the school which affected their learning lives.



James Milne,  
Swinburne Community School,  
Burwood Rd.,  
Hawthorn 3122.

Photos by Tim Shannon, Swinburne Community School.



## OTHER PROJECTS

The following brief extracts on student participation in decision-making are taken from information provided by the following schools. It is hoped to follow these up with a more analytic account (the one on Lynall Hall is on the way) when time and space permits:

BOWDEN BROMPTON COMMUNITY WORKSHOP SCHOOL  
85 Torrens Rd., Brompton 5008 S.A.

Bowden Brompton Community Workshop School was established with a relatively clear set of aims and objectives by a group of teachers, experienced in the mainstream schools, who were committed to those aims. The process of finding the best possible structure and curriculum to achieve those aims and objectives was, and still is, on a trial and error basis. At best, we could be said to be flexible and innovative - at worst, chaotic. It is more appropriately seen as a process - growth, change, mistakes, research, development of students - which may seem fixed at any given point in time, but is in fact, a product of many factors.

In the beginning we were laissez faire, despite a verbal commitment to structure. The kids at that time were all reacting to felt pressures and restrictions of traditional schooling. Teachers were in constant contact with students, and even opened the school one night a week.

School meetings - the self-governing body that we envisaged - produced a new kind of 'prefect' and enmity and frustration among students; instead of the desired unity.

Staff reaction to the emotional strain produced by this structurelessness led to the first imposed structure - individual timetables for each student with compulsory literacy and numeracy and a contracted commitment to the timetable. Students had free lessons and were able to spend time in the then Common Room, playing pool or watching TV. At the end of the year, staff noted the wrecked pool table and lounge furniture, damage to carpets, etc, examined their own personal feelings of exhaustion and professional frustration at the kids' academic work and opted for more change.

The next two years saw continual refinement of the timetable - formalisation of rough streaming for core subjects, creating less elective options; more emphasis on attendance at lessons, introduction of health and career education as compulsory core; reduction of students free time. Access to the new pool table was restricted to non-lesson time. Camps and excursions became more organised. Teachers had a little more time off to organise their lessons. Discipline - experiencing the consequences of certain actions - became less of an emotive issue for staff and students, and was more frequently used - if not always.

We are taking more initiative in Regional Committees and in developing curriculum suitable for other schools. We are looking outward, now, to passing our skills and experiences on to others.

LYNALL HALL  
Brunswick East High School, 232 Albert St., Brunswick 3056.

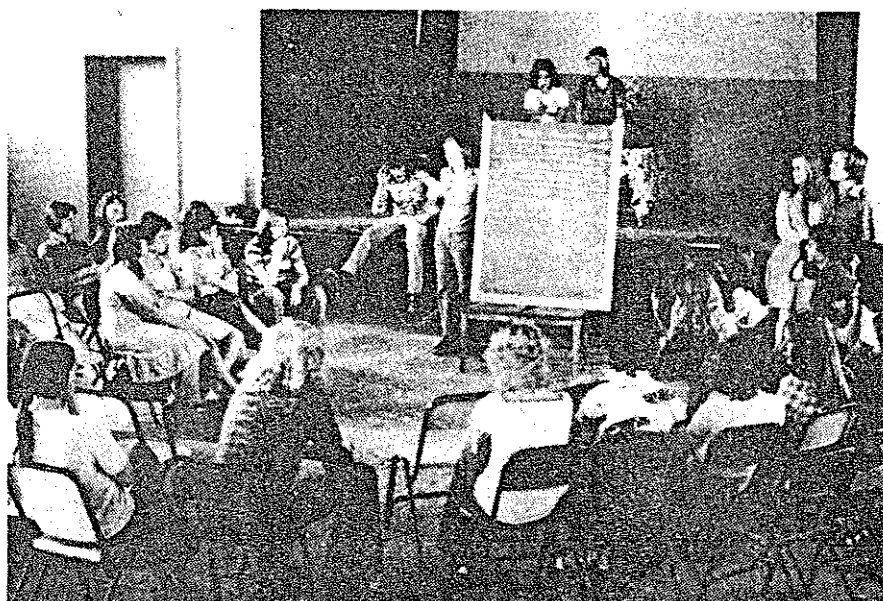
The school stresses the responsibility of all students who participate in the running of the school through regular whole-school meetings. These meetings are a forum for discussion and debate and can make decisions on school rules, money raising and spending, school actions, etc. It is a formal meeting, chaired in rotation by each home group. Whilst it is a slow process educating students to discuss issues, rather than always being told what to do, we have been pleased at student interest at mastering meeting techniques. We believe it is essential for students to achieve this in order to be able to exercise power over their lives and environment now and in the future.

The meetings are preceded by home-group meetings which are used for the communication of notices, discussion of issues, review of work done by students, preparation for the school meeting, decisions on matters affecting just the home group, etc.

Other meetings are held from time to time and students are encouraged to participate in all aspects of running the school. Late in 1979, a "Disputes Committee" representing all home groups and teachers, was set up to hear and decide upon disputes that could not be settled within home groups, and to recommend on the enrolment of students and the employment of teachers.

There is also a Business Meeting after school once a week, which deals with the day-to-day running of the school and any action necessary from school meetings. Students are also welcome to participate in this meeting (except when other particular students are being discussed). It has been one of our disappointments that students have not taken enough advantage of this area of participation, and that these Business Meetings have been mainly staff meetings.

*Copies of the complete Lynall Hall Prospectus for 1980 are available from the above address for cost of mailing.*



#### STC GROUP

The Schools Year Twelve and Tertiary Entrance Certificate (STC) Group is a group of 12 (currently) schools in the Melbourne area that have come together to develop a Year 12 Course as an alternative to HSC. The Course has been operating since 1977, and is currently seeking accreditation from the Victorian Institute for Secondary Education as a whole course within the Group 2 area of Year 12 courses.

The following is an extract from the accreditation submission of the STC Group. Further details are available from:

The STC Group,  
C/o Mr A P Reid,  
Tertiary Entrance Project Officer,  
Victorian Secondary Teachers Association,  
35 Elizabeth Street,  
North Richmond 3121.

*Student participation is mandatory in the S.T.C. Course. The participation of students in the development of curriculum is an effective way of encouraging students to develop skills in decision making and self management and to develop a sense of control over their own lives. Students are also able to gain experience not only in individual decision making but in group decision making. The degree of student participation must be such that students see their decisions contributing positively to the development of their own recognised potential. Meaningful student involvement in course management depends on students having access to information relevant to their interests.*

The submission is thus based on student participation in curriculum development and management, and the whole submission is an example of how the Course operates on this principle. Sections focus on the operation of the Course within the school (decisions on subjects, structures for group self-management, etc), within the classroom (decision-making on content and course development), and on assessment (joint teacher-student and group assessment, non-competitive descriptive assessment, etc).

Within the STC Course, some schools are developing particular "subjects" which focus upon the active involvement of students in structuring activities particularly relating to the world of work. One such, that has asked us to list it as an "alive and well" project is:

INDUSTRY, Ferntree Gully High School, Dorset Rd., Ferntree Gully, Vic.  
(contact: Robert Shepherd).

We hope to carry more detailed information on such projects in future issues.

## Next Issue

We are planning a resource article for the next issue on the availability and relative prices of materials used in publication projects. What sort of transfer lettering and tape should you get? What other materials do you need? A full guide in the next issue.

PLUS: more descriptions of student government, cross-age tutoring and publication projects.

AND: details and enrolment form for the AUGUST CONFERENCE/WORKSHOP.

POSSIBLY: a reprint of material from the U.S. National Workshop of Cultural Journalism Projects, from HANDS ON.

If you have any accounts, comments, letters, articles, etc, we'd welcome them by about the middle of May.

## National Conference

There's been enough interest in a get-together in September to encourage me to go ahead with applications for funding. I don't know how successful these will be. Nor do I know at the moment how many people to expect. I'm making a guesstimate of 100 people - half students - of whom approximately 50 will want to 'live in'.

At the best, funding will be available for travel and accommodation; at the worst we'll look for billets and ask you to find travel costs. In between, we'll try to cover accommodation and may have to ask you to find your own way there.

More details and an ENROLMENT FORM will be in the next issue.

You can do two things at the moment:

1. If you're interested to come and haven't told me - write to me, or get CONNECT 2 and send the form in.
2. If you want a specific workshop listed or would run a workshop, let me know.

Roger Holdsworth

# Resources:

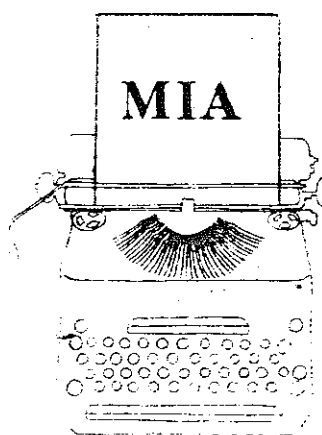
## MEDIA INFORMATION AUSTRALIA

Media Information Australia is published quarterly by the Australian Film and Television School, with the support of the Australian Broadcasting Commission, Australian Broadcasting Tribunal, Australian Film Commission, Telecom Australia, Special Broadcasting Service. It regularly carries articles; notes; material on new books, research in progress, surveys, research resources and international notes; some hundreds of media briefs under a variety of headings.

ASCOLTA has been listed on several occasions, and there was an article on ASCOLTA in a recent issue on multicultural media.

A subscription to MIA (four issues annually) costs \$16 p.a. (\$A18 outside Australia) from:

MIA,  
PO Box 305,  
North Ryde NSW 2113  
Ph: (02) 387.1666



## LEARNING EXCHANGE

The Learning Exchange is a non-profit organisation which attempts to assist people in developing informal learning relationships. Through an index system, Learning Exchange puts people in contact with people - those who are willing to pass on their skills, interests or special areas of knowledge to others, on a non-commercial basis.

Learning Exchange publishes a monthly newspaper listing unanswered queries and including articles and notices of community interest. The bound edition of the 1979 issues is now available - 284 pages of community information, notices, events, articles of interest and much more. It includes a comprehensive three-page index.

The Bound Edition is available through a number of bookshops or direct from Learning Exchange, 432 Waverley Rd., East Malvern, 3145 for \$5 plus postage.

Learning Exchange,  
432 Waverley Rd.,  
East Malvern 3145  
Ph: (03) 211.5413

# Material Available

In the past two issues we have listed material available from CONNECT. Copies of some of this are still available and an order form is included below.

The following material is also available for perusal - write or phone (03.489.9052) to arrange to come round and read or borrow. I can send things by mail, but that tends to be both a hassle and expensive. And I'd like to meet you all!

ASCOLTA: complete back copies.

PUBLICATION PROJECTS: Australian and overseas, as listed in CONNECT.

HANDS ON: U.S. inter-project magazine.

TUTORING MATERIAL - from the National Commission on Resources for Youth and from local projects.

YOU AND AUNT ARIE: How-to-do-it guide on magazine production.

ASCOLTA videotape: available from Moreland High School, The Avenue, Coburg. 3058

BLUDGERS: Booklet from Petersham EPUY project.



## MATERIALS AVAILABLE

To: CONNECT,  
12 Brooke Street,  
Northcote 3070 Vic.

I enclose \$ ..... for the following: (postage included in all costs)

- |  |        |
|--|--------|
| <input type="radio"/> ASCOLTA U.S. Trip Report | \$1.00 |
| <input type="radio"/> THE GOLDEN SHAFT         | \$7.50 |
| <input type="radio"/> CONNECT 1                | \$1.00 |

NAME: .....

ADDRESS: .....

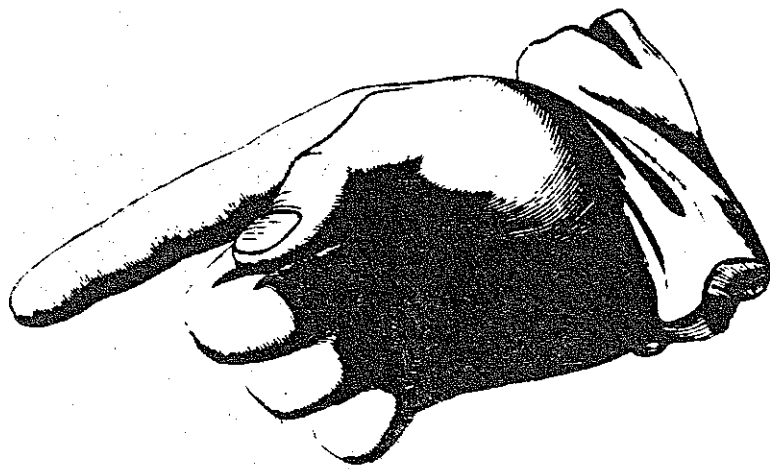
.....POSTCODE: .....

# help!

As you can see from this issue of CONNECT, we are becoming thicker and thicker. Articles are already on hand for issue 4. The response from people in projects has been wonderful and convinces us that CONNECT was overdue.

BUT ... this means that printing costs are getting higher and higher. On the first issue, we started with a debt of \$80 - wiped this off through subscriptions, but then incurred costs of over \$150 for issue 2, which we're just starting to meet.

SO ... as well as getting more subscribers (now aiming at 250 by the end of the year) we're appealing for any financial support you can give us. A section has been included on the subscription form - or just send us your cheque! Thanks.



## Subscription

To: CONNECT  
12 Brooke St.,  
Northcote 3070,  
Victoria.

Name: .....

Project: .....

Address: .....

..... Postcode:.....

- ☐ I enclose \$4 for a 1 year subscription to CONNECT.
- ☐ There's an article enclosed/following.
- ☐ List the project as alive and well in CONNECT.
- ☐ Send copies of CONNECT to the following people/projects:

.....

- ☐ I enclose a donation of \$.....